

SETO INLAND SEA SHOULD BE NATURAL HERITAGE

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Seto Inland Sea was assigned as the first Japanese national park in 1934, with Unzen/Kirishima area. It includes 22,000 km² which occupies nearly 40% of water area and 730 km² sea coast area, the largest national park in Japan.

Since 1960, Japanese economy has developed in galloping way, and industries and population has gathered at the coastal area of Seto Inland sea. Because Seto Inland Sea is the closed sea, devastating red tide gave heavy damage to fish culture. In 1973, National Congress erected "Seto Inland Sea Environmental Protection Special Law" as the member's bill, further in 1978, "Seto Inland Sea Special Law" was settled as eternal law and effected. In May of the same year, based on the published "Seto Inland Sea Environmental Basic Plan", varied measures such as reduction of wastewater to protect water quality was enforced.

Instantly the risky condition of the sea was prohibited, but effects from environmental destruction or water degradation has been prevailing which cannot be thought as safe. At the time in Osaka Bay, huge artificial land development is on going forcedly. The second stage of Kansai International Airport or Kobe Air Port are the stereo type of environmental destruction. Reclamation being forced widely around Seto Inland Sea shallow coastal area are the main factor to promote endangering species and reducing biomass. But prefectural governors around the area have continued to permit taking sand from the sea bottom.

The third article of Seto Inland Sea Environmental Protection Special Law acknowledged that the Seto Inland Sea as "the government evaluate the Seto Inland Sea as the incomparatively beautiful scenery in the world, as the precious fish resources to be deserved and concerved by national people" and that the national government must develop environmental protection basic plan of such worldly superior landscape, the Seto Inland Sea.

Also Japan, the treating member of World Heritage of UNESCO, has liability to protect Seto Inland Sea as World Heritage (natural property) and pass to her descendant. But Government and people have only weak conscious to abide the liability on this treaty.

First of the three requirement to register in World Heritage is to embody outstanding universal value. The second is to meet the one more registration standard designated by the committee. The third is existence of the already developed conservation means to conserve and manage the object. (Note 1)

The standard of natural property consists of four articles. One of them is "to have especially beautiful landscape or show beautiful natural phenomena." The landscape of Seto Inland Sea definitely meets the standard. Also it is the globally unique landscape, then meets the first and second standard. But we lack the means to satisfy the third requirement.

The Seto Inland Sea Environmental Protection Special Law cannot work more than anti-environmental pollution law. We need urgent revise to function as the true and forcible conservation law.